

City of Socorro

111 School of Mines Road
Socorro, New Mexico 87801

Phone (575) 835-0240 www.socorronm.gov



Volume 1, No. 8

September 2008

Spotlight on School Safety

Even though the days are still hot enough to be summer, it's already September, and, as the kids all know, school has started.

Watch your speed

This summer, to help drivers prepare for the onslaught of children and school buses as the school year opens, Socorro Police participated in the state sponsored *100 Days of Summer*. Though Governor Bill Richardson touted it as a program to get drunk drivers off the streets, Socorro Assistant Police Chief Mike Winders says it targeted traffic safety. Over a 2-day period, an unmarked police car clocked driver speeds and 72 citations were issued. "Most of them, probably too many of them, were warnings," Winder said. But he hopes they made the point that drivers need to slow down and obey traffic regulations.

The speed limit is 15 mph in a school zone, and zones are marked at each end, some with signs, some with signs and flashing lights.

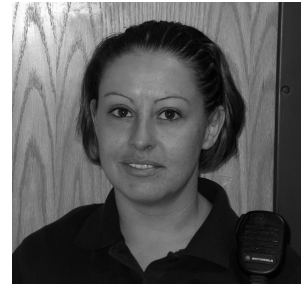
School Resource Officers provide more than protection

Brandy Perkins and Wesley Mauldin wear uniforms to school: police uniforms. They are members of the Socorro Police Department who have taken on the challenge of acting as School Resource Officers.

Perkins, assigned to Sarracino Middle School, lives behind Park View School and gets to know

the kids from an early age. "Presence is a preventative," she says. "For example, if an officer is parked in front of a bank, it's not going to get robbed." It's good for the students to get to know a police officer in a positive way.

Perkins has been a School Resource Officer for 7 years. She started with the department as a dispatcher. The SRO position opened, conveniently, about the time her daughter started school, so she applied. As with all Department



Officer Perkins

Officers, she attended the Police Academy and then went to a week of specialized School Resource Officer Training in Phoenix.

Most of the problems she deals with at the Middle School are fights or bullying and harassment. She also has to deal with truancy, visiting students who "just won't get up and come to school" at home. "They don't realize their parents can get in trouble if they aren't at school."

Perkins wants to remind parents that after 10 unexcused absences, parents can be prosecuted for the truancy of their child. An absence is only excused if the secretary has received written notice of the excuse from the parents.

"You can't just tell the teacher when you drop your kid off at school. And, especially with the younger ones, if you send a note with them they may leave it in their pack and the secretary never gets it," Perkins warns. When there are 10

absences, Perkins will bring a letter for the parents to sign that designates a time for them to come speak with the principal. Often things can be worked out, but the law does give the District Attorney the means to prosecute.

Officer Wesley Mauldin is in his second full year as Student Resource Officer at the high school. When the job came open, he wasn't sure he wanted it. "I was leery. I didn't think I'd like it. You're used to dealing with drunks, shoplifters: you arrest and bring them in and do the paperwork." He spends considerably more time talking with the students. "I play counselor a lot more than street cop."

Mauldin has a good working relationship with the high school principal. They both insist that students be respectful of the high school staff. "They're here to educate the students. I tell the students to use them, let them help you, they're there for you."



Officer Mauldin

Both Perkins and Mauldin visit all the schools, sometimes giving presentations, sometimes speaking to individuals stemming from teacher or principal requests. They also participate in training on an annual basis to receive legal updates. They may also attend specialized training. Mauldin recently returned from an "active shooter" class. Before the incident at Columbine High School in Denver, the protocol for someone firing a weapon at students was to wait for the SWAT team to arrive.

"Now you take out the threat immediately," Mauldin says. His job is to keep the students safe. "They're our future. I want to get them on the right track and headed in the right direction."

Enchanted Skies Star Party—Not just for tourists

The annual Enchanted Skies Star Party will be held September 24-27. It is one of the events supported by Lodger's Tax, designed to attract tourists to the Socorro Area. This year El Camino Real Heritage Center has been designated the official "Dark Sky Site," with programs, activities and entertainment Wednesday through Saturday. Other venues include the VLA, Magdalena Ridge and Etsorn Campus Observatory. It's a great opportunity for "locals" to take advantage of all the telescopes and astronomy talent our city has to offer. For more information see: <http://enchantedskies.org/index.html>

Looking for something to do?

Check the web! The City website has an up-to-the-date list of community events and activities including festivals, sporting events, conferences and annual affairs. You'll also find information about your city government and city services—you can even pay your utility bill online. Take a look!

www.socorronm.gov

Employee Anniversaries

Shanon Crespin	20 years
Donna Griffith	10 years

City Council

Mary Ann Chavez-Lopez	Gordy Hicks
Toby Jaramillo	Donald Monette
Michael Olguin, Jr.	Ernest Pargas, Jr.
Peter Romero	Chuck Zimmerly
Ravi Bhasker, Mayor	
Pat Salome, City Clerk	